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TAGS: [PREL](#) [LE](#) [IS](#) [AG](#)  
SUBJECT: ABBAS RECEIVED BY PRIME MINISTER IN ALGIERS

REF: ALGIERS 1373

PRIME MINISTER, NOT PRESIDENT, RECEIVES ABBAS  
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¶1. (SBU) Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas followed in the footsteps of Lebanese party leader Saad Hariri (see reftel) and made a stop in Algiers July 26 as part of what Abbas described as a tour of Arab capitals devoted to "bilateral discussions on next steps" to address the situation in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon. Prime Minister Belkhadem received Abbas and, in his public comments after their meeting, reminded the Palestinian President of Algeria's support for the Palestinian people, commenting that "Algeria remained faithful to its principles." Belkhadem's remarks, as reported in the press, where uncharacteristically terse, perhaps because President Bouteflika -- who would normally receive Abbas -- was inexplicably unavailable. (Note: A source at the Presidency told us that Bouteflika is out of the country on vacation, information which has not been reported in the press. End Note.) Abbas told the press the Rome Conference was a "failure" in light of the inaction to halt immediately the "complete and catastrophic" Israeli destruction. Abbas underscored that the failure occurred despite the support of European and Arab countries for an immediate cease-fire.

GOA CANCELS NORTHLAND PRESS EVENT  
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¶2. (SBU) Separately, the GOA canceled the July 27 press event scheduled aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Northland (see reftel), and the U.S.-hosted reception aboard the vessel that evening was sparsely attended. (Note: According to MFA sources, the GOA was sensitive to the image of GOA officials standing on a U.S. "naval" vessel at a time when the U.S. is expediting the shipment of smart bombs to Israel for use in Lebanon. End Note.) The MFA and Ministry of National Defense (MND) were both represented, but in small numbers. A single parliamentarian represented each major political party. Contrary to prior notification from MFA that no one would represent that Ministry, Director for North America Laouari attended. Laouari remarked to PolEc Chief that the GOA knew the current crisis would eventually pass and that it was important not to boycott the Northland entirely.

LATEST RALLY FOR LEBANON DRAWS SMALL CROWD  
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¶3. (SBU) A rally organized by the Presidential coalition parties and the Workers Party in solidarity with Lebanon for late afternoon July 26 had a disappointing turnout, according to political party sources. Our contacts reported that only a couple of hundred people attended the rally, which had been widely advertised. Newspaper photographs of the event in the official daily newspaper El Moudjahid showed a largely empty auditorium, and El Moudjahid did not report the number of

persons in attendance. The rally, at the end of a work week during the traditional vacation period, appears not to have generated much popular interest.

DAUGHTON